

Migration briefing

December 2024

- In 2023, internal migration continued to be the main driver of population growth in East Sussex, with international migration representing a slightly smaller proportion of population change.
- However, while the number of net arrivals from within the UK (internal migration) was around the average for the last 10 years, at 4,495 in 2023 (10-year average 4,557), international net arrivals were at their highest ever level with 2,923 net arrivals in 2023 (10 year average 466).
- With more deaths than births occurring in the county every year for over 40 years, and negative natural change at its highest ever level, the rising natural decline of the population is offset by gains from new residents moving in.
- There were 2,605 new National Insurance numbers (NINOs) issued to non-UK nationals for the purposes of employment in the year to June 2024, which is 14% lower than the 3,024 that were issued in 2022/23. The highest number of NINOs were issued to people from India (409), Nigeria (239) and Afghanistan (206) in 2023/24.
- In the year to the end of December 2023, a total of 2,317 people arrived in East Sussex as asylum seekers or refugees, including 1,815 who arrived from Ukraine, 384 through the Supported Asylum scheme and 118 who arrived through the Afghan Resettlement Programme. A further 69 unaccompanied asylum seeker children arrived in 2023, and so far, 57 have arrived in 2024.
- According to the 2021 Census, there was net positive internal migration from England and Wales of +3,570 in the 12 months to March 2021, with +3,780 from England alone, but net loss of -210 to Wales. While there were +3,700 from London, and +1,800 net moves from the rest of the South East, there was a net loss of -1,710 to the rest of England.
- 2,950 usual residents (0.5% of the total population) moved into East Sussex from outside the UK in the 12 months prior to the Census being taken, down from 3,620 (0.7% of the population) in 2011.
- Of these 2,950 international arrivals in 2021, only 1,340 said that they intended to stay more than 12 months.
- In 2023, 17% of all births in East Sussex (725 out of 4,321) were to mothers who were not born in the UK. This compares to 33% of all births in England as a whole. Of these non-UK born mothers, nearly half (48%) were born in Europe, and 39% were from the EU. Another 28% were from the Middle East or Asia.

Contents

Migration and population change in 2023	3
Figure 1: Proportion of net migrants to East Sussex from UK and overseas, 2023.....	3
Figure 2: Components of population change in East Sussex, 2012-2023	4
Internal and international migration, gross and net migration flows and rate in 2023....	4
Table 1: Internal migration from within the UK in 2023	4
Table 2: International migration from overseas in 2023	4
Table 3: Total net and gross migration flows, and migration rate.....	5
Age groups, sex and migration.....	5
Figure 3: Internal and international migrant flows to and from East Sussex by age	5
Figure 4: Net flow of international migrants to East Sussex, 2002-2023, timeline.....	6
Other evidence on international migration	7
Figure 5: Estimates of non-EU+ immigration compared with other data - E&W	7
National insurance registrations.....	7
Figure 6: National insurance registrations in East Sussex, 2003-2024 by broad area ...	8
Figure 7: Percentage of new NINOs in 2023/24 by broad nationality group	9
Table 4: NINOs issued in East Sussex: top 10 countries of arrival in 2023/24	9
Table 5: NINOs issued in East Sussex: top 10 countries of arrival in 2013/14	10
Figure 8: NINo registration rates per 1,000 working age people 2014-2024.....	10
Asylum seeker and refugee data from the Home Office	11
Figure 9: Chart showing refugee and asylum arrivals to East Sussex, 2024	11
Table 6: Number of people arrived in 2024 via various resettlement schemes	12
Table 7: Total number arrived in 2024 via resettlement schemes, rate, and percentage from Ukraine	12
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker children	13
Table 8: Number of unaccompanied Asylum Seeker children, 2018-2024	13
Mother's country of birth.....	13
Figure 10: Percentage of live births to UK-born and non-UK-born mothers in 2023 ...	13
Migration data from the 2021 Census.....	14
Figure 11: Migration to and from East Sussex by location in England, 2021	14
Figure 12: Top areas within UK: internal migration flows to and from East Sussex....	15
Internal migration in 2021 by age and sex	15
Table 9: Migrants to and from East Sussex by age group.....	16
Figure 13: Migration to and from England by age group - East Sussex	16
Internal migration in 2021 by tenure	17
Figure 14: In- and out-flows from East Sussex to England, by tenure	17
Further information	17
Contact details	18

Migration and population change in 2023

According to the latest ONS mid-year estimate components of change data, total net migration (internal and international) rose to +7,420 in 2023 in East Sussex, 14.6% higher than in 2022. This was made up of +4,500 internal migrants from within the UK, and +2,920 international migrants. Natural change continues to be negative, with 3,020 fewer births than deaths in the county between mid- 2022 and 2023. Losses from natural change are still higher than net arrivals from overseas, despite the increase in the number of international migrants.

International migration, while significantly higher than in previous years, still has a smaller impact on the county's migration flows than internal migration (from the UK). In 2023, +4,920 people came into the county from overseas (although some may be British people returning), while -1,990 people left, a net inflow of +2,920.

The country has seen a large number of arrivals from Ukraine over the last couple of years, with more than 1,800 arrivals to the county through the Ukraine sponsorship scheme alone (Data for the year to end December 2023 - Ukraine refugees also arrived via other routes, and a larger number arrived in 2022 than in 2023).

There were also significant numbers arriving through other routes for asylum seekers and refugees, with 118 arrivals through the Afghan resettlement programme, and 384 arrivals through the Supported Asylum programme up to December 2023. In addition, there were 69 unaccompanied asylum seeker children recorded as arriving in the county in 2023.

The overall net flow from overseas is 32% higher than in 2022, but contrasts with net outflows to overseas in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Internal migration flows are substantial in East Sussex and the main driver of population change. In 2023, +35,795 people moved to districts in the county from within the UK (including from other districts in East Sussex), while 3-1,300 moved elsewhere in the country, a net inflow of +4,495. This was similar to the average number of net moves between 2012 and 2022 of +4,560.

Figure 1: Proportion of net migrants to East Sussex from within the UK and overseas, 2023

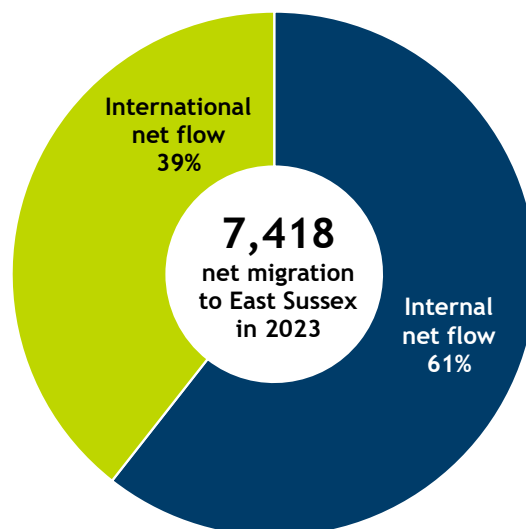
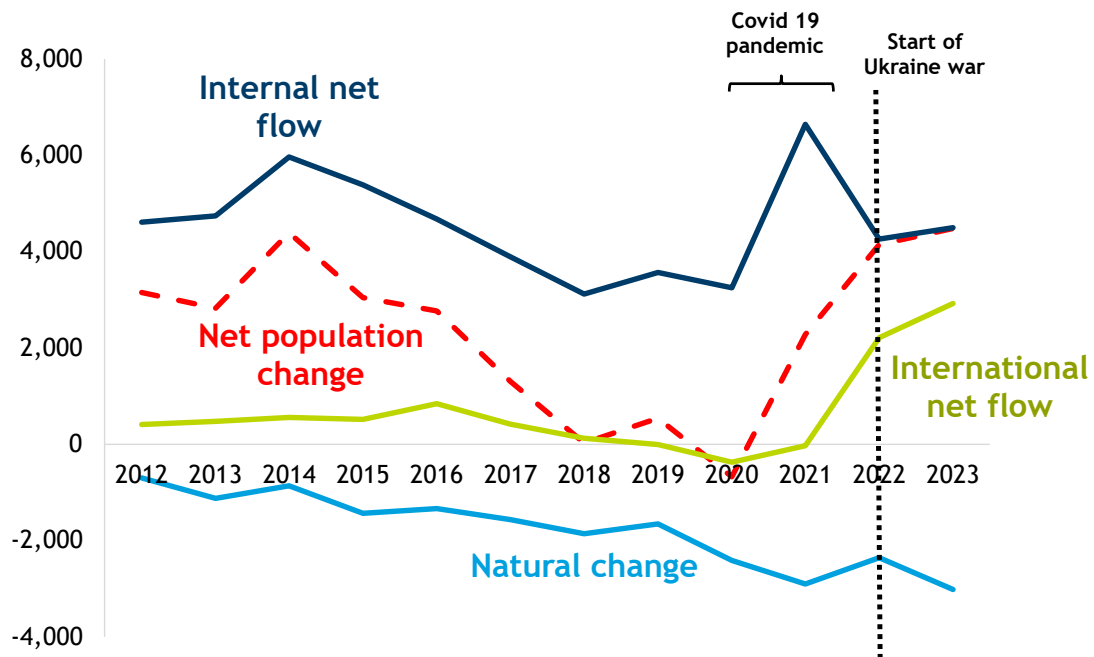


Figure 2: Components of population change in East Sussex, 2012-2023



Internal and international migration, gross and net migration flows and migration rate in 2023

Table 1: Internal migration from within the UK in 2023

	In flow	Out flows	Total net flow
Eastbourne	+6,991	-6,270	+721
Hastings	+5,300	-5,248	+52
Lewes	+6,597	-5,744	+853
Rother	+6,477	-5,369	+1,108
Wealden	+10,430	-8,669	+1,761
East Sussex	+35,795	-31,300	+4,495

Table 2: International migration from overseas in 2023

	In flow	Out flows	Total net flow
Eastbourne	+1,911	-586	+1,325
Hastings	+760	-306	+454
Lewes	+670	-361	+309
Rother	+643	-245	+398
Wealden	+933	-496	+437
East Sussex	+4,917	-1,994	+2,923

Table 3: Total net and gross migration flows, and migration rate in 2023

	Total net migration	Population turnover (Gross migrant flows)	Migration rate (gross flow per 1,000 people)
Eastbourne	+2,046	15,758	151.8
Hastings	+506	11,614	127.9
Lewes	+1,162	13,372	131.9
Rother	+1,506	12,734	134.2
Wealden	+2,198	20,528	124.7
East Sussex	+7,418	74,006	133.2

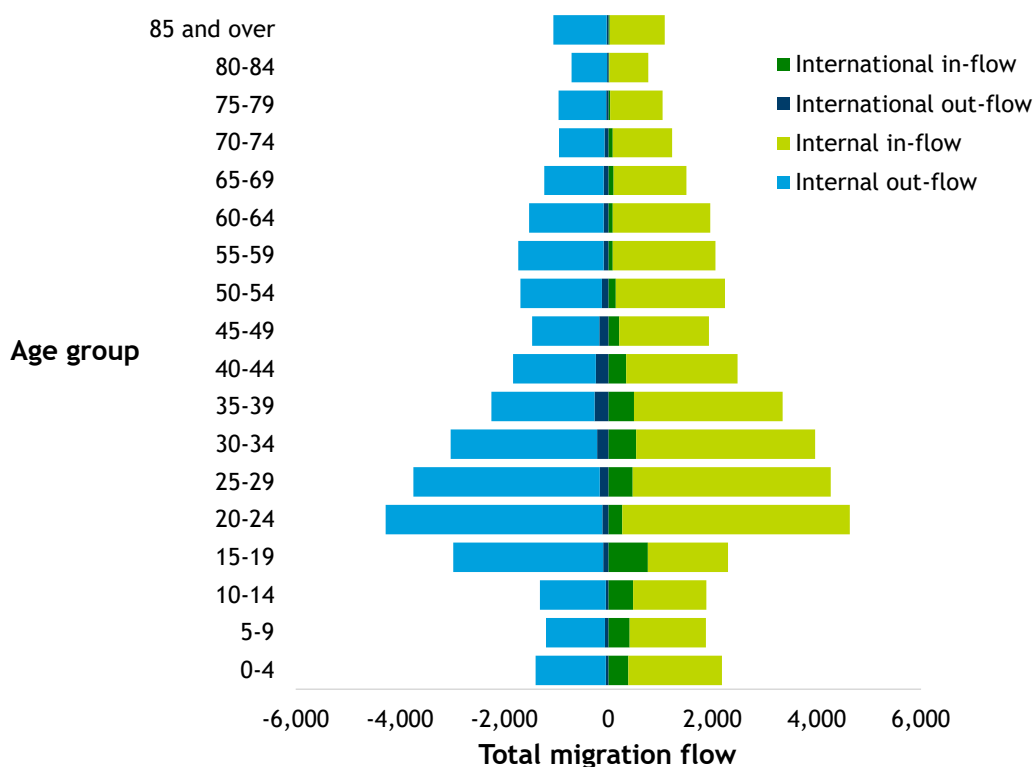
Note: data for internal migration in East Sussex is the sum of the district moves, and thus includes moves from one district to another.

We look at gross flows and migration rates to measure population ‘churn’ - the volume of population turnover compared to the population as a whole.

Age groups, sex and migration

In 2023, 47.1% of the net inflow of migrants to the county were male and 52.9% were female, but while only 43.5% of net internal migrants were male, males accounted for 52.8% of international net migration flows. In the districts, 70.0% of total net arrivals to Hastings were female, compared to only 44.4% in Eastbourne.

Figure 3: Internal and international migrant flows to and from East Sussex by age group in 2023

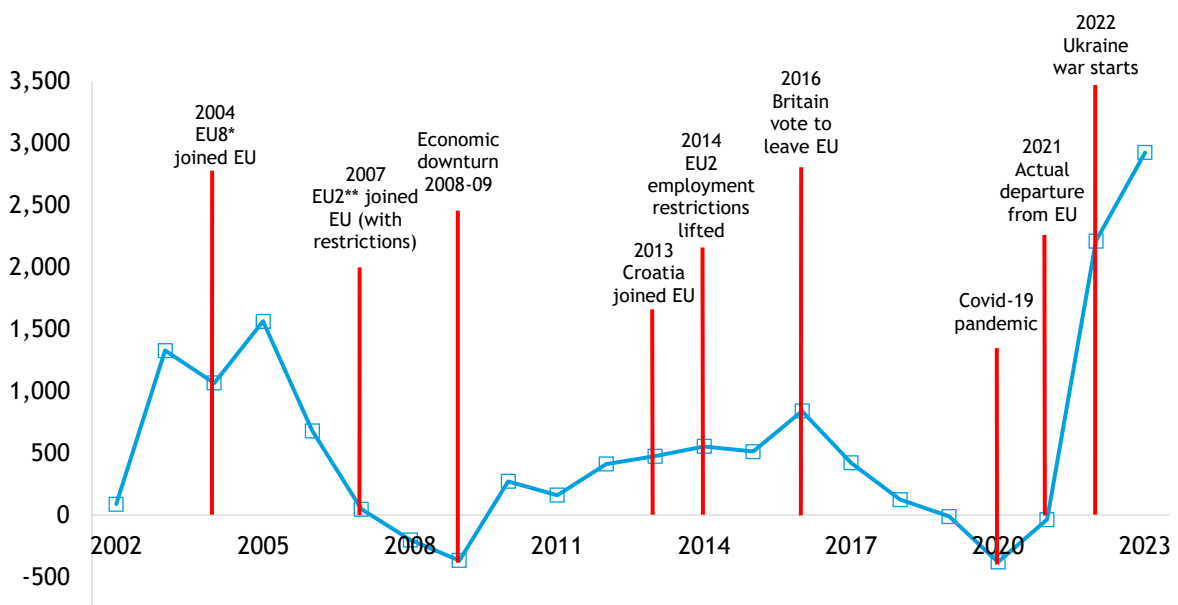


Younger working age people are generally more likely to move in or out of the area and to and from abroad. In East Sussex in 2023, 40% of all moves into and out of each district (gross flows - including moves between districts) were made by people in their 20s and 30s.

There was a net flow of -285 young people aged 18-29 out of the county in 2023. There has been a net outflow of young people in every year since at least 2012, but in 2023 this flow was at its lowest for many years, contrasting with net out flows of -1,093 in 2022 and -1,090 in 2021.

This net outflow was made up of a net outflow of -869 to elsewhere in the UK and a net inflow of +584 from overseas for young people aged 18-29, and while the outflow to the UK was at its lowest since 2014, the net inflow of young people from abroad into East Sussex was at its highest level in 2023.

Figure 4: Net flow of international migrants to East Sussex, 2002-2023, timeline with key dates



Glossary of terms for discussing EU migration:

The 27 countries of the European Union (excluding the UK) are grouped as follows:

1) **European Union EU14** - includes countries who joined the EU prior to May 2004. These are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden.

2) **European Union EU8** (sometimes called EU Accession Countries) - countries that joined the EU on 1st May 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia.

3) **European Union EU2** - Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU on 1st January 2007. The UK imposed restrictions on access to labour markets of these EU2 citizens in 2007, which were lifted in January 2014, when citizens of these countries gained the same rights as all other EU citizens to live and work in any country in the union.

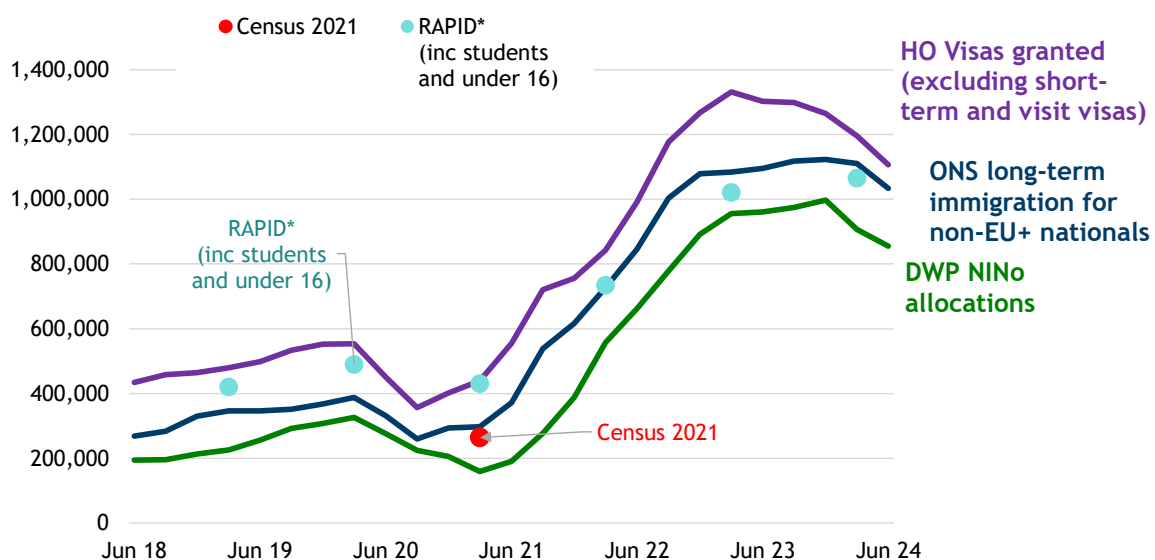
4) **European Union Other** - comprising Cyprus and Malta (which joined the EU on 1st May 2004) and Croatia (joined the EU in July 2013) which are not part of the EU8.

Other evidence on international migration

In order to better understand international migration we can look at other data sources. These include the National Insurance numbers to non-UK nationals (NINOs), data on live births by mother's country of birth, Home Office data on Asylum seekers and Refugees, and Department for Education data on Unaccompanied asylum seeker children.

The ONS have produced this useful chart to show how estimates of non-EU+ immigration compare with other available data sources which they use in their analysis. Note that some of these sources, such as the RAPID database, and the Home Office Visa data are not published at county or district level.

Figure 5: Estimates of non-EU+ immigration compared with other available data sources - England and Wales



Source: ONS

*Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID)

National insurance registrations

For detailed data about which countries new international migrants are coming from, we can look at registrations for National Insurance numbers to non-UK nationals (NINOs). The NINo registration data has drawbacks: there is no data on people leaving and some people might register for an NI number (NINo) and then quickly move on out of the area to another part of the UK. But it has the advantage that the data is more timely - data to 2024 is now available and shows a rapidly changing picture. A NINo is generally required by any overseas national looking to work in the UK, including the self-employed or students working part time. All adult overseas nationals allocated a NINo are included, regardless of their length of stay in the UK.

In the year to June 2024, there were 2,605 NINo registrations in East Sussex. This was a fall from 3,024 in the year to June 2023, and this compares with the ONS figure for inward international migration of 2,995 (see possible reasons for this difference above) for the

year to mid-2023. This was 14% fewer than in 2023. This compares to a decline of 18% in England in the year to June 2024.

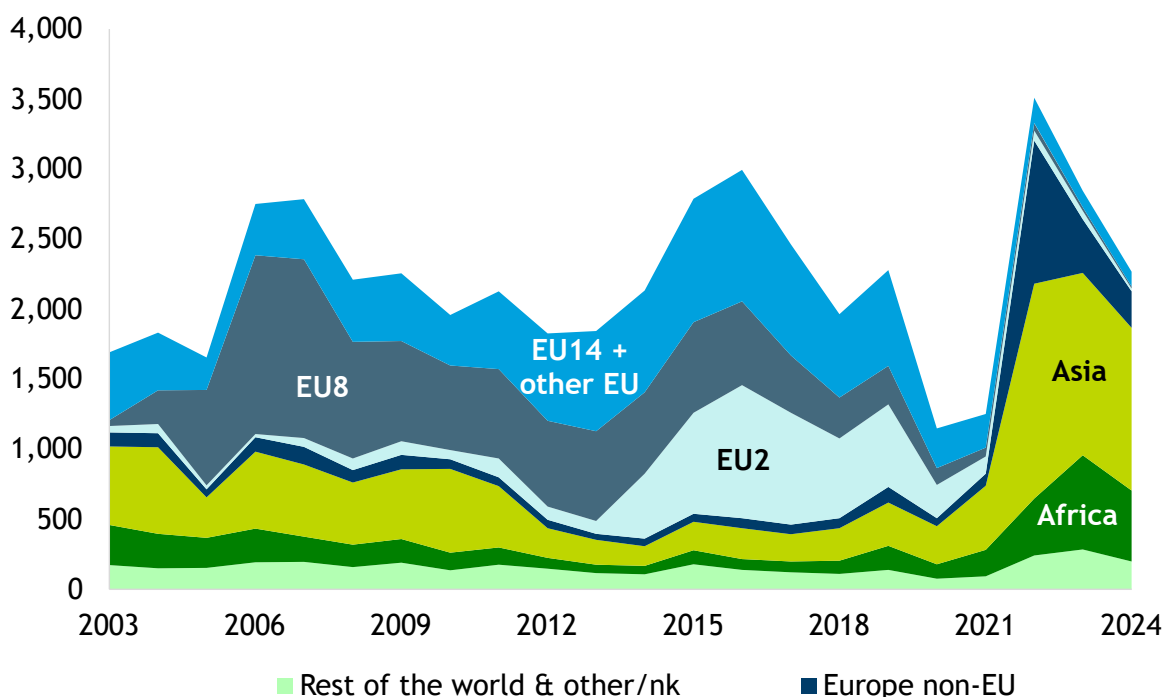
50% of inward international migrants measured by the NINo registration data came from Asia (1,310 people). The largest groups within the Asia category were from India (409), Afghanistan (206), Philippines (122) and Pakistan (116).

NINo registrations from foreign nationals peaked in the year to June 2022 when there were 3,177 registrations, reaching their highest level since the records began in 2002, but there has been a decline of 18% in the last two years, contrasting with a 7% fall in England.

The areas people are coming from has changed drastically since the UK officially exited the EU in 2021 and free movement of EU citizens ended. While in the year to September 2016, 83% of NINos were issued to people from the EU, by 2024, this was only 12%. By contrast in 2024, 51% of NINos were issued to people from Asia, and 22% from Africa, whereas these two continents together accounted for only 10% of registrations in 2016.

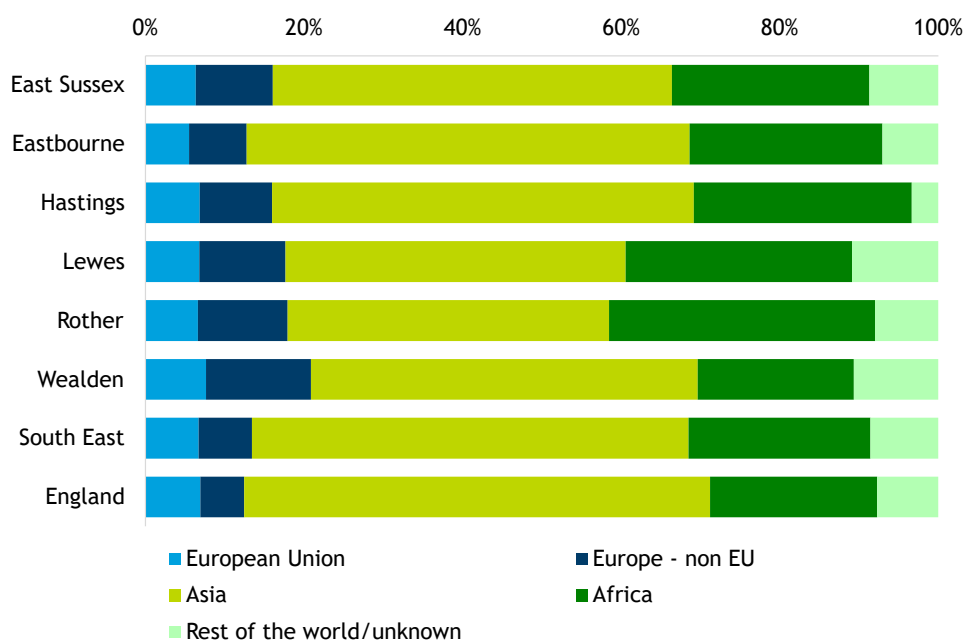
In the year ending September 2024, NINos were issued equally to both males (49.5%) and females (50.5%) in East Sussex, but this contrasts with the year to September 2022 when 60.1% of NINos were issued to females. In 2024, Lewes saw the highest proportion of females arriving (54.7%), but Eastbourne saw a larger proportion of males arriving (53.2%).

Figure 6: National insurance registrations in East Sussex, 2003-2024 by broad area group (data for years ending September)



(see box on page 6 for definitions of EU14, EU8 and EU2)

Figure 7: Percentage of new national insurance registrations in 2023/24 by broad nationality group



These changes can be seen when we compare the top 10 countries of arrival in 2023/24 to the top 10 countries of arrival in 2013/14.

In 2023/24, India saw the highest number of arrivals, with 409 NINOs issued, with 239 issued to people from Nigeria, and 206 to Afghans.

This compares with 2013/14 when Poland (281), Romania (238) and Spain (220) saw the highest number of arrivals.

Following the outbreak of the war, Ukraine saw large numbers registering for NINOs in 2022/23 (537), but although numbers declined significantly in 2023/24, they were still the fourth largest country group.

Table 4: NINOs issued in East Sussex: top 10 countries of arrival in 2023/24 (2013/14 and 2022/23 for comparison),

	2013/14	2022/23	2023/24
India	26	626	409
Nigeria	5	199	239
Afghanistan	6	18	206
Ukraine		537	157
Philippines	15	199	122
Zimbabwe		128	119
Pakistan	5	53	116
Bangladesh	9	81	96
Sri Lanka	5	61	77
Ghana		79	76

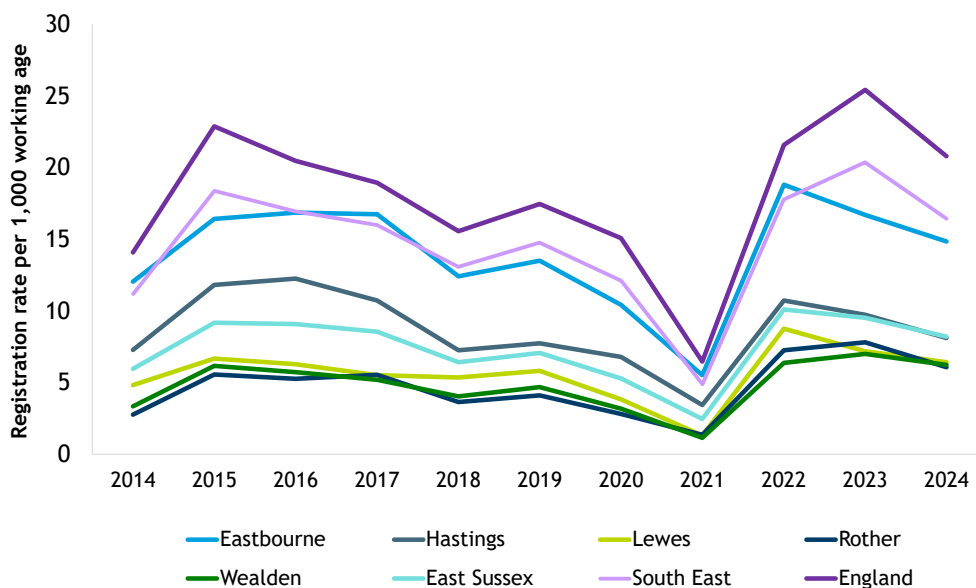
Table 5: NINos issued in East Sussex: top 10 countries of arrival in 2013/14 (2022/23 and 2023/24 for comparison)

	2013/14	2022/23	2023/24
Poland	281	13	7
Romania	238	51	27
Spain	220	17	12
Portugal	123	14	12
Italy	99	12	15
Bulgaria	87	17	8
Hungary	86	5	7
Latvia	65		
France	54	16	17
Czech Republic	49		

Eastbourne and Hastings have consistently seen the largest volumes of NINo registrations from foreign nationals, compared to other districts. This reflects work available in the health service and the hospitality sector. But it may also reflect the greater availability of services and lower cost rented housing, and existing migrant communities, in urban areas.

We can see this by looking at registration rates per 1,000 working age people. The registration rate in East Sussex, at 8.2 per 1,000 working age people in the year to June 2024, is consistently below the rates for England (20.8) and the South East region (16.4). Eastbourne has the highest rate at 14.9, with Rother (6.1) and Wealden (6.2 per 1,000) having the lowest rates.

Figure 8: National insurance registration rates per 1,000 working age people (aged 16-64), 2014-2024



In the year to June 2024, Rother saw the largest fall in the volume of NINo registrations, with 22% fewer than in 2023, and in Hastings numbers fell by 17%. Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden all saw 11% fewer registrations in 2024 compared to 2023.

Asylum seeker and refugee data from the Home Office

The Home Office publish annual data on the number who are provided with support by local authorities because they are asylum seekers or refugees. In the year to June 2024, 2,209 people arrived as asylum seekers or refugees in East Sussex, 88% of whom came via the Homes for Ukraine scheme (1,937 people), with just 272 people arriving in the county via the Afghan resettlement and Supported asylum schemes.

In Eastbourne and Hastings, a larger proportion of asylum seekers and refugees were from schemes other than the Ukraine scheme, compared to the other 3 districts, who received very few asylum seekers and refugees outside those from Ukraine. Rother and Wealden had no arrivals from the Supported Asylum route, and Lewes just 6.

But Lewes, Rother and Wealden took larger numbers of people through the Homes for Ukraine scheme. 96% of asylum seekers and refugee arrivals in Lewes, 95% in Wealden and 91% in Rother came via the Ukraine scheme.

Figure 9: Chart showing refugee and asylum arrivals to East Sussex, year to June 2024

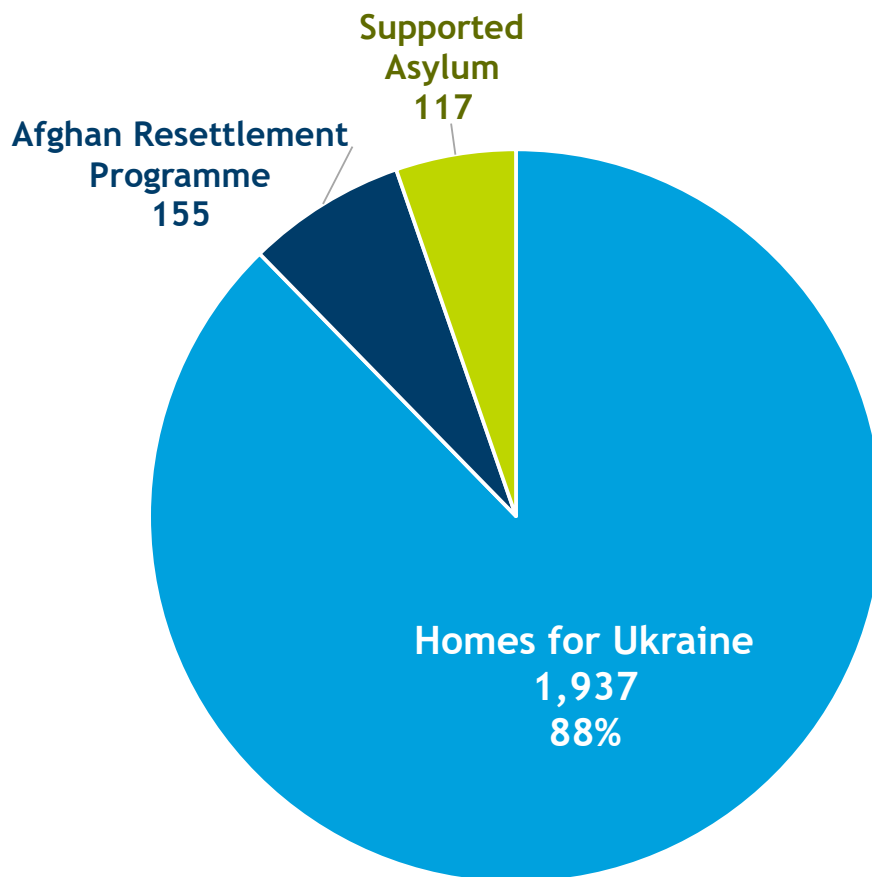


Table 6: Number of people who have arrived in the year to June 2024 via various resettlement schemes

	Homes for Ukraine*	Afghan Resettlement Programme	Supported Asylum
Eastbourne	230	33	42
Hastings	172	29	69
Lewes	337	9	6
Rother	363	38	0
Wealden	835	46	0
East Sussex	1,937	155	117
South East	25,271	3,731	5,910
England	114,223	18,316	85,276

* not including super sponsors (arrivals)

Table 7: Total number of people who have arrived in the year to June 2024 via various resettlement schemes, rate, and percentage from Ukraine

	All 3 pathways	Rate per 1,000 people	% Ukraine
Eastbourne	305	2.94	75.4%
Hastings	270	2.97	63.7%
Lewes	352	3.47	95.7%
Rother	401	4.23	90.5%
Wealden	881	5.35	94.8%
East Sussex	2,209	3.98	87.7%
South East	34,912	3.68	72.4%
England	217,815	3.78	52.4%

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker children

The Department for Education publish data on the number of unaccompanied asylum seeker children who are placed in the county. In 2024, 57 children came to East Sussex as unaccompanied asylum seekers.

Table 8: Number of unaccompanied Asylum Seeker children, 2018-2024

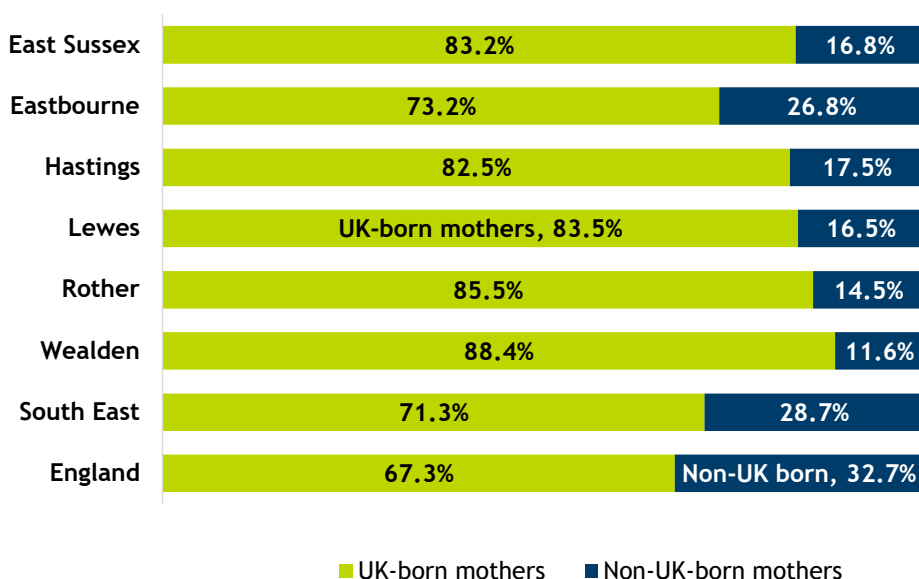
	East Sussex	South East	England
2018	6	370	2,380
2019	17	630	3,090
2020	13	670	3,200
2021	34	620	2,380
2022	24	1,030	4,080
2023	69	1,710	5,510
2024	57	2,900	6,700

Mother's country of birth

Another measure of overseas migration is the number and proportion of babies who are born to mothers who themselves were born outside the UK. In 2023 there were 4,321 live births in East Sussex (the lowest number of births since at least 1991), and 725 of these (17%) were to mothers who were born overseas. This compares to 33% of births in England as a whole, which were historically also very low.

The district with the highest proportion of new mothers born outside the UK was Eastbourne, where 27% of babies were born to mothers born overseas.

Figure 10: Percentage of live births to UK-born and non-UK-born mothers in 2023

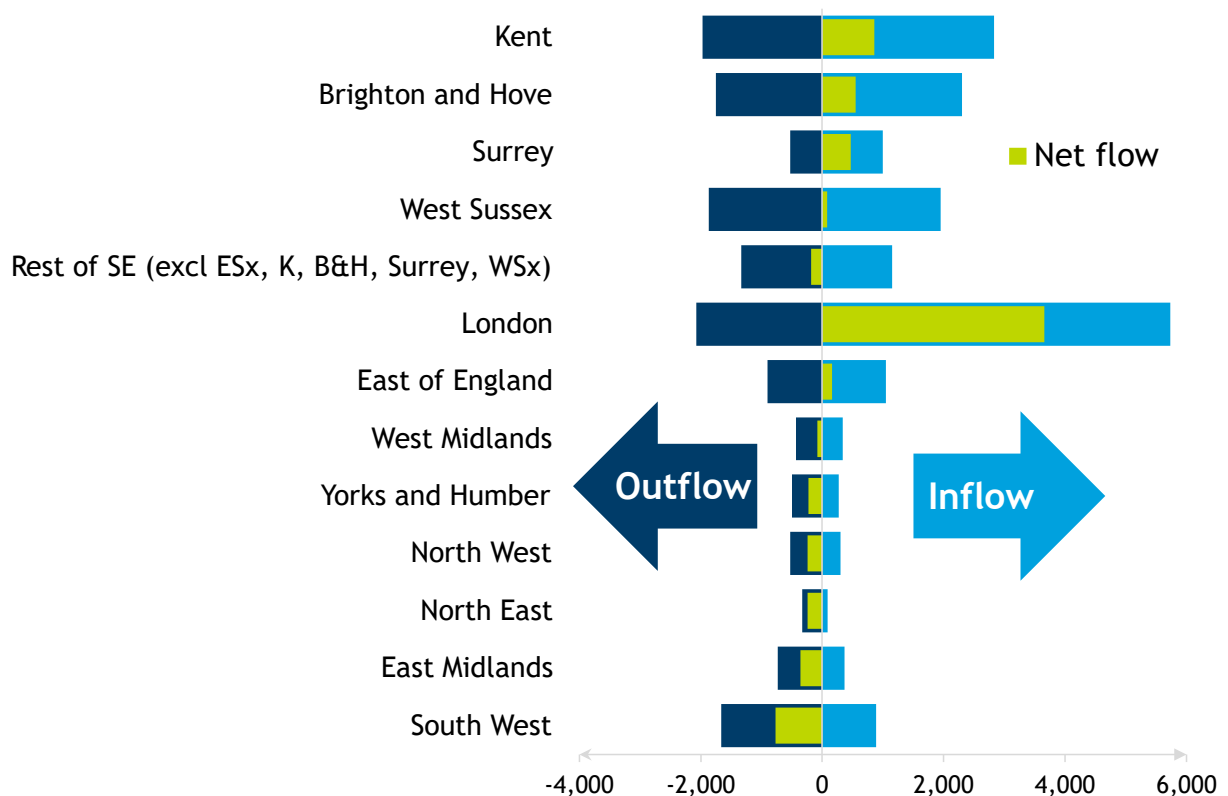


Migration data from the 2021 Census

The 2021 Census took place during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a period of unparalleled and rapid change; the national lockdown, associated guidance and furlough measures will have had a significant impact on the migration topic.

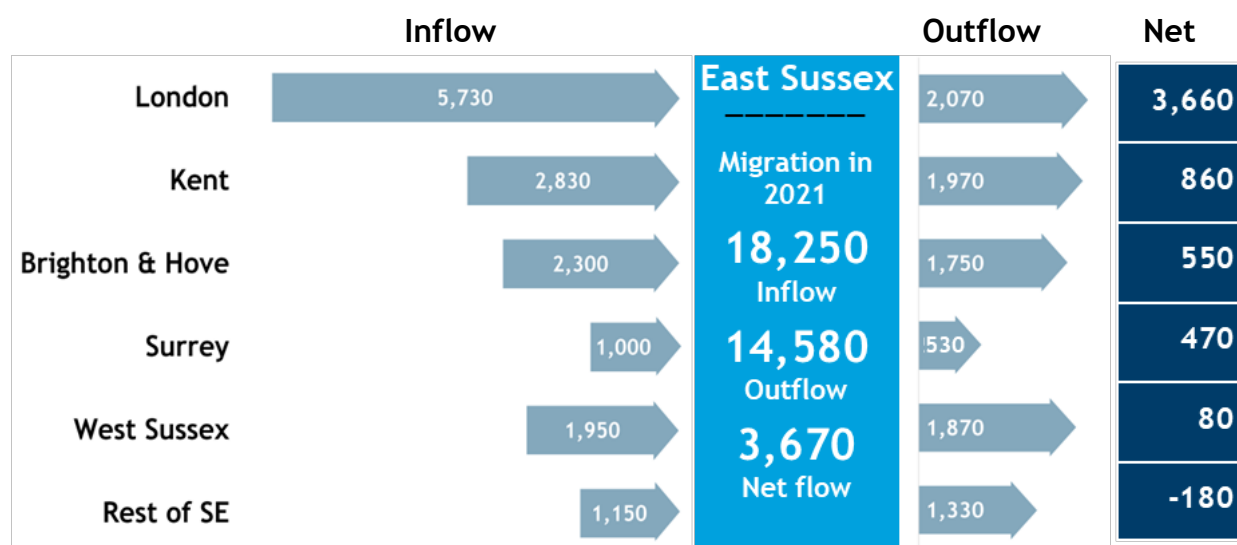
- In 2021, 18,610 people moved into East Sussex from other parts of the UK, of whom 18,280 moved from England and 330 moved from other countries of the UK, including 180 who moved from Wales.
- 14,500 people moved out of East Sussex to other parts of England, and 390 moved to Wales (there is no data for moves to Scotland and Northern Ireland).
- So, there was net positive internal migration from England and Wales of +3,570 in the 12 months to March 2021, with +3,780 from England alone, but net loss of 210 to Wales. While there were +3,700 from London, and +1,800 net moves from the rest of the South East, there was a net loss of 1,710 to the rest of England.

Figure 11: Migration to and from East Sussex by location in England, 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Figure 12: Top areas within the UK for internal migration flows to and from East Sussex



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

- Within the county there were 32,610 moves, with 24,360 people moving from one district of East Sussex to another and 8,260 people moving within the district where they already live.
- 2,950 usual residents (0.5% of the total population) moved into East Sussex from outside the UK in the 12 months prior to the Census being taken, down from 3,620 (0.7% of the population) in 2011.
- Of these 2,950 international arrivals, only 1,340 said that they intended to stay more than 12 months.
- When we look at net migration from England, while there was a net in-flow of 6,900 owner-occupiers, there were net losses of 980 private renters and 150 social tenants to other parts of England.

Internal migration in 2021 by age and sex

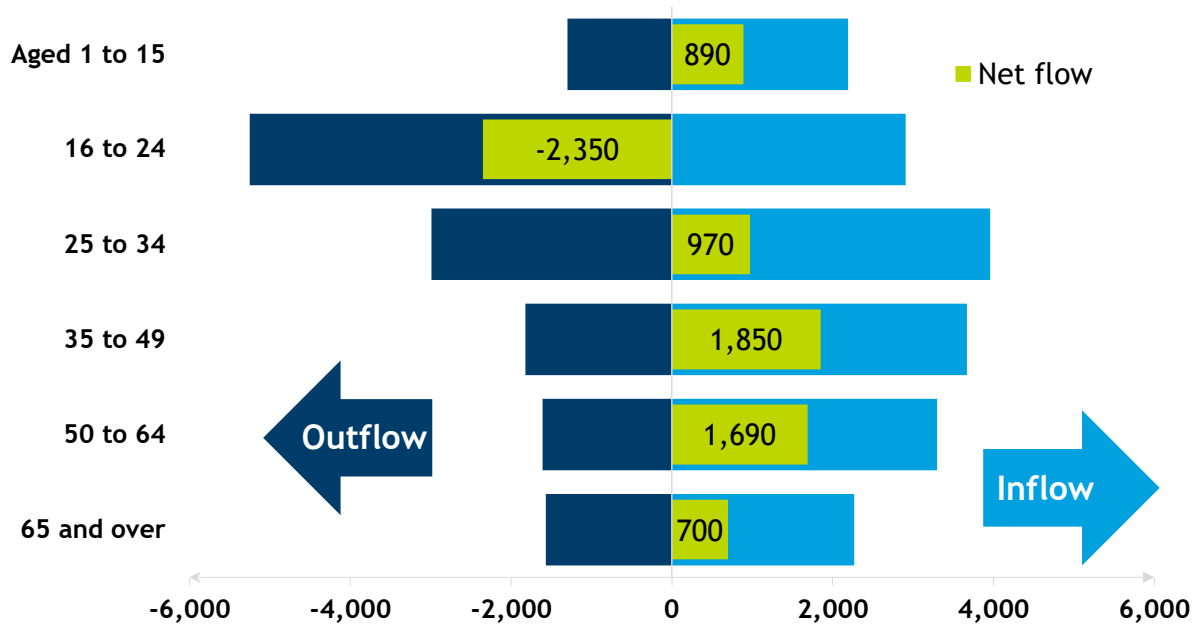
- There was net positive migration from England among the under 16 age group (+860), and among those aged over 25 (+5,210), with the largest net in-flow from those aged 35 to 44 (+1,850). However, there was a net out-flow of people aged 16-24 (-2,350).
- 54% of the net in-flow of migrants from the rest of England were women, with a higher proportion (61%) of those in the 25-34 age group being female. In the districts, 60% of net migrants to Hastings were female, with Rother seeing 51% of net migration from males.
- When looking at net flows by location and age, there were net out-flows to all other locations in England among the 16-24 age groups, with the region outside the South East seeing the largest net out-flow of the 16-24 group being the South West -460 people, and a net flow of -1,330 young people aged 16-24 to all the regions of the UK outside the South East and London.

Table 9: Migrants to and from East Sussex by age group

	In migration from England	Out migration from England	Net flow
Aged 1 to 15	2,190	1,300	890
16 to 24	2,910	5,250	-2,350
25 to 34	3,960	2,990	970
35 to 49	3,670	1,820	1,850
50 to 64	3,300	1,610	1,690
65 and over	2,270	1,570	700
All ages (1+)	18,300	14,550	3,750

Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

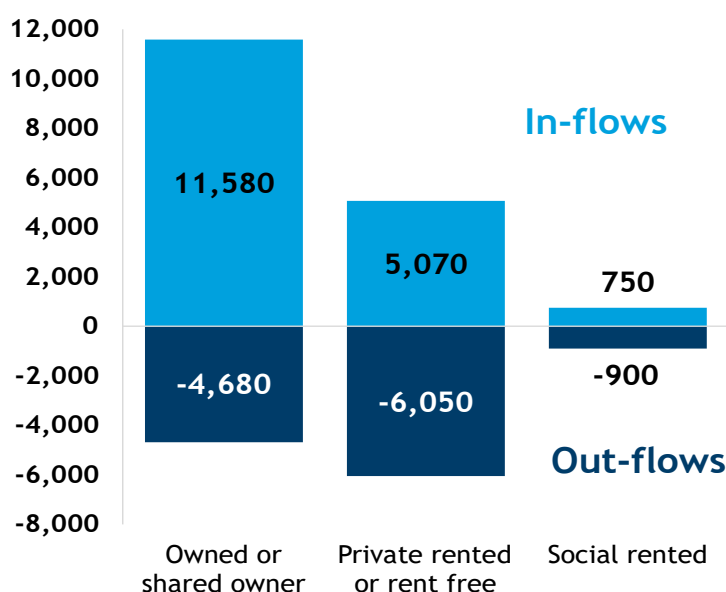
Figure 13: Migration to and from England by age group - East Sussex



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Internal migration in 2021 by tenure

Figure 14: In- and out-flows from East Sussex to England, by tenure



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Further information

There are two broad types of migration. International migration measures the number of people moving into an area from overseas and out of an area to overseas. Internal migration looks at the number of people who move within the UK. The total movement of people, both into and out of an area, is known as population turnover or gross migration flow. This measures the ‘churn’ of population.

Migration flow data is released by the Office for National Statistics. The internal and international migration data are released every year as part of the components of population change data, with the [Mid-Year Population Estimates](#). Age group information is also available by district.

Detailed migration data was also released for the 2021 Census, which has details of where people have moved to and from in the previous year, if it is within England and Wales. These detailed origin-destination tables can be found on [Nomis](#).

In addition, the [Department for Work and Pensions](#) (DWP) publish data on the number of National Insurance numbers issued to foreign nationals who wish to work in the UK.

The [Home Office](#) releases data on the number of Asylum Seekers and Refugees who receive support from local authorities, and the Department for Education publish data on the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker children.

- For more information about migration estimates see the [ONS website](#).
- For further information about migration in East Sussex contact esif@eastsussex.gov.uk

Contact details

The Research and Intelligence Team, Governance Services provides demographic and socio-economic data, intelligence and insight to support East Sussex County Council and other East Sussex partners. The Team also manages East Sussex in Figures (ESiF), the Local Information System for East Sussex. Visit www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk or e-mail esif@eastsussex.gov.uk for more information.